



**County of Los Angeles
DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES**

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PATRICIA S. PLOEHN, LCSW
Director

April 2, 2007

TO: Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky, Chairman
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Supervisor Yvonne Brathwaite Burke
Supervisor Don Knabe
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FROM: Patricia S. Ploehn, LCSW
Director

ELECTRONIC SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE REPORT SYSTEM (E-SCARS)

This is to notify you of our intent to request the Internal Services Department (ISD) to execute a Work Order for an amount not to exceed \$600,000, under the Information Technology Support Services Master Agreement (ITSSMA). This Work Order is requesting an Electronic Suspected Child Abuse Report System (E-SCARS) to be developed to allow the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and Law Enforcement Agencies the ability to track SCARs electronically, and facilitate the District Attorney's statutory oversight function of cross-reporting.

In accordance with ITSSMA Guidelines, prior Board notice is required for projects that will exceed \$300,000. This request is to obtain a team of developers (Contractors) experienced in web application software and database development to build an application automating the suspected child abuse process.

BACKGROUND

E-SCARS will comply with the California law that requires children's services agencies and law enforcement agencies to "cross-report" certain allegations of child physical and sexual abuse to each other and the District Attorney using the state-mandated form "suspected child abuse/neglect report" (SCAR).

"To Enrich Lives Through Effective And Caring Service"

In addition, The Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Act (Penal Code § 11164 et. seq.) imposes a mandatory duty on certain classes of individuals (e.g., physicians, teachers, coroners and clergy members) to report suspected allegations of child abuse. It also creates a mandatory duty on the part of law enforcement to investigate these allegations. The ability of law enforcement to respond effectively is directly tied to the accuracy and timeliness of the reports they receive. Thus, delays in the cross-reporting process delay law enforcement's response, potentially endangering children's lives and creating liability for the Department and the County.

SCOPE OF WORK

Under the supervision of the County project managers, these contractors will support the Department in the successful development and deployment of the E-SCAR System. Below is an outline of some duties and tasks that are included in the project:

- Finalization of the screens & reports design;
- Development of the E-SCARS application and necessary reports that would provide all functionalities indicated in the attached requirements and any additional requirements resulting from Task 3 below;
- Application testing (this will include module testing, alpha testing and beta testing);
- Documentation which includes code & programming documentation, screen specification documentation and user documentation;
- System implementation, which includes installation of the system on the County production servers and training the trainers;
- System technical documentation and user train-the-trainer training for DCFS, Sheriff and DA.

With the continuation of this expertise, we can assure safety for children and maintain the integrity of providing adequate services to children and families through the efficient use of technology and the successful implementation of mission critical systems.

JUSTIFICATION

The Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department and the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office staff must enter the SCAR information received by fax from DCFS into their own computer systems, a process which is costly and slow. Sometimes if the Sheriff's Department or a law enforcement agency receives a telephonic report of alleged abuse, they create the Department of Justice (DOJ) Suspected Child Abuse Report and fax a copy to DCFS and make a telephonic report to DCFS. The current process limits the ability to track and audit the receipt and actions taken on a report by the law enforcement agency. The District Attorney's office has a statutory oversight for

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cross-reporting, but is unable to monitor compliance because countywide information is not available.

FISCAL IMPACT

The total cost of the development of the E-SCARS application will be fully funded by a \$2,000,000 grant approved by the County of Los Angeles, Quality and Productivity Commission.

CLOSING

Consistent with ITSSMA policies and procedures, we are informing your Board of our intention to execute the subject Work Order. In two weeks time we will instruct ISD to proceed with executing the Work Order. If there are any questions regarding this Work Order request, please contact me at (213) 351-5600 or your staff may contact Leo Yu, Bureau Chief, Information Services, at (562) 345-6609.

Noted and Approved:

Jon W. Fullinwider
Chief Information Officer

PSP:LHY
PJ:jl